

# 01. Rin and Dancing and Trying to Change

Actually, Rin had always felt inferior.

That is —dressing up girlishly doesn't seem to suit me.

After all, Rin has never had long hair; I'm a diehard fan of short hairstyles. My favourite thing in the world is moving my body and doing sports, and cats and dogs and other kinds of animals, insects and stars, and my babies—13-speed shift gear bike and skateboard!

And pork bone soy sauce broth ramen with dried bamboo shoots!

See, I'm not like normal girls, right?

Even Rin herself knows about it.

In album photos, you can always see the young Rin wearing blue, green, or aquamarine-coloured shirts, plus shorts.

And Kayo-chin at the side was always wearing a very girlish layered skirt, with knee high socks decorated with pink ribbons. It's the complete opposite of Rin —Rin had always been mistaken for a boy a lot too.

In junior high, I used to wear my casual clothes and stroll around the station with Kayo-chin, and we were often mistaken for a couple.

Ahh~ Really!

Rin is not a boy!

Since when did this start?

I used to not care whenever I got mistaken for a boy.

I even thought I was pretty cool being the only girl who could be mistaken for a boy in my clique.

At that time I also felt slightly triumph ant...

But why do I mind so much lately?

Rin is a girl too.

Rin wants to wear a miniskirt too!

Sometimes I really want to say that.

But... as expected, nothing has changed. Like now, whenever μ's is deciding their costumes, Rin still always gets assigned to wear shorts.

Sigh.

Or should I discuss with Kotori-chan (who's in charge of designing our costumes) about it next time, nya? Rin is a girl too, so just for once, Rin really wants to try wearing an idol costume with a miniskirt.

But... would it be really weird if I say that?

Because Rin is definitely the one who looks most like a boy in μ's.

It doesn't matter if it's now or in the past, Rin looks just like a rowdy boy with short hair, with not even a slight hint of girlishness or cuteness ...



“So~ So~ Rin really really wants to wear a miniskirt next time! After all, even though Rin looks like a boy, I’m still actually a girl ny’know !”

After Rin loudly complained at the only other person in the club room, Kotori-chan looked really surprised.

Heh heh heh ☆

Whenever Rin thinks of something, it's really hard to keep it to herself, hm. My junior high school teacher even commented in our graduation book that

“Taking actions immediately is Hoshizora’s strong point”!

Kotori-chan seems troubled.

“Of course Kotori thinks Rin-chan is girlish, and cute too! But, if Rin-chan puts it like that, Kotori will be troubled... because the next shorts’ design is an overall with rolled up pants, and it’s inspired by the super energetic Rin-chan ...”

Hmm~ As expected, it can’t be helped, nya?

Even though I’m really happy that Kotori-chan made the designs with Rin in mind, but...

“Ah, but then... I thought of a good idea ❤”

At this time, Kotori-chan smiled at Rin as if she thought of something, and she beckoned Rin to come over.

“You have to keep it a secret from everyone ...”

Kotori-chan lightly cupped her hand around Rin’s ears, rustling...

And started whispering.

“So like, if Rin-chan... can fulfill aaall of Kotori’s wishes, then Kotori can perform a magic on Rin-chan. It’s a special magic that can turn Rin-chan into the most suitable idol to wear miniskirts in the world, and everyone’s eyes would widen at the sight of you...”

Whoaaaa... Rin’s face started to burn just by hearing it.

My entire face is red.

“But, you cannot tell anyone about this magic. Not even Kayo-chan.”

Kotori-chan smiled happily after finishing.

Rin silently nodded with her blushing face.

My heart pounded faster.

It feels like there’s a dark and mysterious shine in Kotori-chan’s eyes, that if Rin broke the promise, she’d turn into foam and disappear, nya...



“Everyone listen! Kotori brought a new member over to meet everyone today, she wants to join μ’s—”

Kotori-chan opened the door from the staircase leading to the rooftop and loudly announced.

The sounds of discussion rise and fall. The lively after-school atmosphere filled with chatters was broken by a sudden deadly silence.

Honoka-chan kicked away the surrounding luggage bags, making a scraping noise, and quickly stood up.

“Whoa, Kotori-chan?! Why so sudden? You didn’t even tell me about this in the morning—”

Umi-chan was holding the half-opened door, looking shocked.

“A-anyway, please come in. We welcome new members anytime.”

At the same time, Rin somehow felt Eli-chan’s surprised eyes hovering all over Rin.

Nico-chan started dancing about. “Wow~ Great, you must really admire Nico so much that you want to join us, right? Kyaa~ From today onward, you’ll be Nico’s Fan Club Member #1! Nico will take care of you like a big sister from now on~ ♥” But Maki-chan immediately dissed her:

“Really now? Not every underclassman in the world is your fan! See, you scared her with your nonsense. Ah, she’s always like this, please don’t mind her. μ’s is not a group where weird people gather together —”

Maki-chan slowly approached Rin with doubts.

“Although..... Are you a first year? Do we have someone like this in our class?”

Rin, who was looking at the ground shyly all this while, quickly turned her face aside.

Kotori-chan hastily stood in front of Rin and helped her explain:

“Ah, she’s actually my cousin. She’s currently studying in another school, and she’s really shy. So, she hopes that maybe she can change if she participates in school idol activities. After hearing about μ’s from Kotori, she was thinking if she wants to transfer schools so she can join μ’s...”

“Wow~ That’s amazing! μ’s finally recruited a student for our school ♥ I’m so happy, and you’re a first year like Hanayo, too— I hope when you transfer over, we’ll be good friends.”

Kayo-chin’s eyes were shining, and she kept nodding.

Meanwhile, Nozomi-chan was performing fortune telling at the side— ah.

She closed her book and said:

“I... had already predicted this. I foresaw that there’ll be a new, huge wave heading towards μ’s...”

Nozomi-chan closed her eyes as she went on, as if in deep thought, and then Honoka-chan jumped:

“Eeehh, is that so? Amazing, amazing, amazing! If that’s the case, of course we super super welcome you! Welcome to Otonokizaka! From now on, we must always be together—”

Kotori-chan managed to stop Honoka-chan before she went on with her unstoppable force.

Honoka-chan pouted.

Sob... What should I do? Rin already used up all her energy just from staring at the ground to avoid any accidental slip-ups.

Sigh, I never thought it would turn into this.

It would be nice if Kotori-chan could just tell everyone what’s going on... but even if I thought so, nothing would have changed.

Eli-chan approached me and said:

“Hmm~ Long, straight hair with a big ribbon, paired with layered miniskirt... are you going for a young maiden look? So cute~ ♥ μ’s doesn’t have any characters like this currently, you know .”

That’s right.

Kotori-chan had transformed Rin into a “first-year young girl who wants to join a club” today.

Rin is wearing a long wig, paired with a large ribbon, and even put on pink blush to whiten her tanned skin, along with a flounced skirt under her uniform skirt, and a princess-sleeved blouse for the upper part, lady-styled high socks for the legs, and my feet are facing inwards too ... Ouch, the insides of my knees are in so much pain.

Nico-chan protested loudly:

“What are you talking about Eli-chan, the best young girl character in μ’s is definitely Nico!”

Nozomi-chan cut her off before she managed to finish:

“Although~ Just like what Elichi said, a sharp chin definitely befits the image of a young and beautiful girl, it’s really cute ♥ After all, our ‘young girl style’ is a little obscure ♪ ”

Nozomi-chan shifted her eyes to Nico-chan as she went on, earning Nico’s screams of “What do you mean by ‘obscure’?!” as Maki-chan tries to calm her down.

Pfft, hehe h ... Rin couldn’t hold back her laughter any longer.

“Ah, she said something! Her voice is so cute! ”

Honoka-chan smiled at Rin.

Rin peeked out from under the long bangs of this wig that Rin specifically picked out to hide her face, to look at Honoka-chan’s smile, and felt much

happier.

It felt like everyone was looking at Rin like they're looking at a girl.

Everyone thought Rin was an aspiring idol, and a really girlish girl at that.

That's right, Rin looked just like a real girl with this dress-up!

Then people would stop calling Rin a cool idol and call her a cute idol instead.

Rin was so happy she started blushing even under all that foreign makeup, and couldn't help but smile ♥

Umi-chan suddenly asked Rin:

"Pardon me, but are you good at singing and dancing? After all, we're a school idol club and the practices can get strict..."

As expected from someone who is in both the kendo and archery club, Umi-chan sure seemed like the person in charge at times like this.

"Ah, she said she's really good at dancing. And she's athletic too— she can even do backflips!"

After Kotori-chan explained nicely, Kayo-chin stared at Rin suspiciously.

Uwah— Kotori-chan exaggerated.

After hearing Kotori-chan say 'athletic', Maki-chan said in an anxious tone:

"I...is that so... Then, why don't we all dance together? Although, μ's' dances can be quite difficult, so I think you might have trouble at first, but don't worry about it. We'll properly teach you later, too."

Just as Maki-chan said that.....

Music started playing out loud. Ah, it's "*Bokura no LIVE, Kimi to no LIFE*".

Nico-chan flashed a mischievous smile and struck a peace sign. Don't tell me Rin has to dance right here, right now—?

Rin was shocked by this situation; at this moment, Kotori-chan gently patted Rin's shoulder.

"You've seen our performance, right? Let's dance together."

Kotori-chan blinked at Rin and started dancing as she finished her sentence.

Eh..... Eeehhhhh—

As Rin was still in shock, Nico-chan apparently got competitive and started dancing as well.

Whoaaa~ it felt like she was more motivated than usual.

Nico-chan was dancing with her big round eyes and a super great smile. Beside the bitterly smiling Eli-chan and Nozomi-chan— ah, Honoka-chan started dancing too.

"It's okay to take it easy at first. After all everyone in μ's came together to dance out of pure interest, we won't scold you even if you're not good."

Honoka-chan really tried to recruit Rin into the club...

As I watched the both of them, Rin felt like dancing too, nya~ ♪

Everyone started praising me as soon as Rin started dancing , like "Wow!", "She's good!", or "Amazing, she could probably perform on stage already!"— Rin could hear all these compliments.

Maki-chan was whispering something to Kayo-chan secretly.

"She's completely different from when we just started dancing."

The others who didn't join us in dancing started singing along happily as well.

As Rin danced, Rin felt more and more carefree— and slowly stopped caring about what others thought, simply indulging in the dance.

Hand actions, stopping positions, flashing a bright smile, a spin and a jump!

Flutter flutter.

The lace-filled dress fluttered about with the flow of the dance; Rin really loved this feeling.

Flutter flutter.

The girlish long hair and ribbons were swirling.

Just by watching things like this, Rin felt different from the usual Rin...

Ah— So there IS a world like this!

Rin's heart was beating so fast, Rin even felt pain from how tightly clenched it was.

It's the first time Rin ever felt like this.

Has everyone been dancing like this all this while?

Flutter flutter, flutter flutter.

It felt like a dream.

My body felt so light, like the decoration doll on top of a sweet, sweet cake.

It almost felt like a pair of pure white wings would grow out of Rin's back, turning me into an angel before flying into heaven!

Striking a pose sweeter than usual.

Singing a song sweeter than usual.

Rin naturally did a pose like this and sang with a voice like this— this wonderful feeling was over the roof.

Rin was thinking:

Being a girl—

Being an idol—

Makes me so happy!

Rin hoped that this happiness could get even... even higher.

Rin was only thinking about this...

...so Rin didn't even notice, nya.

While Rin was so immersed in dancing.....

The wig came loose when Rin wasn't paying attention.

Every time Rin jumped with some force, the loose wig slipped backwards a little. At last, Rin's entire face was revealed—

“Ahhhhhh! It's Rin-chan—”

Kayo-chin was the first one to scream in surprise.

The others screamed as well when they heard Kayo-chin.

Nico-chan quickly stopped the music.

Whoops... I've been found out.

“Heheheheh... Trying out a new image, I'm Hoshizora Rin! Please take good care of me from now on— Just kidding ☆”

Seeing Rin like this, Nozomi-chan and Kotori-chan started laughing.

Even though Nico-chan looked surprised, she still gave a smile that seems to be saying 'you won this time'. Maki-chan's mouth was gaping, so shocked she couldn't say anything.

Eli-chan shrugged and smiled bitterly, throwing me a look .

As for Honoka-chan, she hugged Rin tightly while saying, "Whoa~ Amazing~ Rin Rin Change! How did you do that?" while Umi-chan at the side said, "Hm..... You got me — I actually thought you were a calm and collected beautiful girl."

“Hey— Rin had always been a cute, calm and collected beautiful girl, all right?!”

Rin jumped and fought back immediately, to which Eli-chan replied:

“A real beautiful girl would never jump randomly like this, you know.”

Everyone laughed upon hearing it.

After this incident, a transformation game crafted and directed by Kotori-chan trended among μ’s for a while. Adhering to everyone’s request, Rin wore the long, beautiful girl idol-esque wig a lot.

Although... to be honest, though it’s all thanks to Kotori-chan for giving Rin a chance to experience this, after transforming like this, I think.....

It’s so hard to dance with long hair, nya!

This is the thing that has been bugging Rin.

Everyone is really something else. Just by wearing this wig, Rin’s head felt so, so heavy, so heavy I couldn’t take it anymore~

Thinking that Rin really isn’t suitable for the authentic beautiful girl style, Rin stopped playing this transformation game after a while.

...So, from now on, Rin will still debut with her short hair and energetic shorts. Please take good care of me, nya!

### Comments ♥ Umi

I think Rin’s liveliness and energetic dance suits shorts really well. I don’t think wearing shorts equals not being girly— I think they’re even shorter than a miniskirt and thus show more, so I really don’t want to wear shorts..... Speaking of which, she really fooled everyone that time. I didn’t notice, even though Kotori was smiling so much; this really was my mistake.

## 02♪ Rin and Kayo-chin (part 1)

Actually, Rin doesn't remember the first time Rin met Kayo-chin~!

Heheheh ♥

Because we lived really close, and attended the same kindergarten, we've known each other since we were really small. If you want to know where and when we actually met for the first time —it was probably in a children's hall when we were one or two years old.

But Rin completely forgot about what happened back then, nya.

On top of that, Rin wasn't the brightest in the first place, so I can't really recall all these things that happened in the past.

It's always Kayo-chin bringing a thing up first, then Rin remembers—eh? Oh right, I remembered something now.

When we were kids, Rin made Kayo-chin cry by pulling on her hair; and once convinced an unwilling Kayo-chin to go into a haunted house, except Rin ran away by herself first, and then only apologized to no end when Kayo-chin came crying to Rin later; and one time during Kayo-chin's birthday, Rin gave her a whole small box of pill bugs as a birthday present and made her cry.

Rin also once insisted on playing a swing together with Kayo-chin, assuring her there wouldn't be any problems, though later Rin used too much force and sent both of us flying...

Ah, at that time even the adults were involved, so I actually vaguely remember it.

Because both our knees were scraped, we had to sit at the side during P.E. classes for a while♪

But, the event that happened when Rin and Kayo-chin were still in elementary school—when we played in the Akihabara Public Transport

Museum, which is now demolished—Rin doesn't remember anything from it.

It's only when Kayo-chin mentioned it that Rin felt like, "Ah, now that you mention it, I think it did happen!" ...heheheh♪

Although Maki-chan always scolds Rin with, "Is it because you keep making Hanayo cry, you're pretending to forget about it...", it's not like that, really!

The smart Maki-chan would never understand.

For Rin, who was born with lesser brain folds—she can only pay attention to the present for every second of her life.

I don't have time to dwell in the past, nya.

Because— ah.

Hey, look!

Look at that ever-brightly shining... blue sky!

It's almost as if it's transparent; so clear, so high, so refreshing... Just by watching, it feels like a hole has broken out in my heart— that then slowly gets emptied.

Whoa, feels like I'm about to be sucked in.

It feels like Rin is about to be sucked into the sky, and then gently, slowly float to somewhere faraway like one of the clouds.

Yeah.

Rin is like this all the time.

So... this year's extra-long summer has ended, and the summer show, which had been acting as a long-term goal for μ's, has ended as well.

The cultural festival in autumn is over, too.

On top of that, Rin and everyone in μ's had an unexpected chance to perform—that is, the stage show we got to put on during the cultural festival.

The audience was larger than we expected, which really touched us, and we've gotten a good rating for that show too♪

Whoa~ How should I put this?

Just by thinking back on it, my body feels really enriched!

At times like this, Rin always feels really... antsy, for some reason.

I really want to practice dancing after school hours.

I think about any recent events that will let μ's perform in them.

I just want to do a backflip on the spot~

I daydream about how if winter break is here sooner, Rin can practice or have a training camp with everyone every day—something like that.

But if I tell them, they'll say something will come up eventually, or that the preparation is tough, or that we don't have enough in our budget. Or, they'll say that since summer break has just ended, it's too soon to have activities; and winter is so cold, so do we really want to have a training camp during this time — something like that.

That's~ so~ weird~

Seriously, everyone is too pessimistic!

Since we've already decided to work super hard for μ's, what's the problem with telling Rin, who's always thinking about μ's, "You did well," huh~?!

Not only that, Maki-chan was really mean, too.

She told Rin, "Before winter break, there's midterms and finals and also an ability test waiting for you~", and, "Hopefully you won't be forced to take winter classes because of your bad grades"— these ill-intended words.

That's so weird!

It's not like Rin fails all her tests every time!

Even though I really want to say that... There's a history of Japan quiz next week; what should I do? Rin can't remember anything from the textbook... No, even my notebooks are completely blank.

Sigh, guess I'll have to borrow Maki-chan's or Kayo-chin's notebooks again, huh?

After I started thinking about these things...

Rin's shoulders suddenly lost their strength, and I ended up walking the entire trip home in a weak state.

Eli-chan and Nozomi-chan had an important meeting to discuss with the student council today, so for today μ's didn't have a practice plan, which hasn't happened to us in a long time; also, Kayo-chin is on class duty today. Rin wanted to wait for Kayo-chin to finish up her duty so that we could go home together, but Kayo-chin said she's helping the teacher with handouts, not sure when will she be done ...

It feels like Rin just got dumped.

Just when Rin was leisurely strolling about alone.....

From the corner of my eyes, I saw a bright orange...little pumpkin.

"Ah, it's a Halloween pumpkin lantern!"

There's a kid carrying a huge bag printed with the logo of an English tuition centre nearby, wearing a black cape and an orange pumpkin cap.

Oh yeah...

Rin remembered.

It would be Halloween soon.

As soon as I saw the kid, Rin's brain, which was just agonizing over what to do earlier...

...started working again.

All sorts of ideas flashed through my mind.

Is it because my brain has less folds, so I think faster than everyone else?

After all, the travel distance is short.

Although Rin's memory capacity is lower, on the other hand, Rin is really good at organizing her thoughts!

It's just like in tests: the fewer the option, the less time you need to spend to figure out the answer.

Wow~ It's so rare that Rin's brain is working well, nya!

After having my imagination running wild... Ding♪

Rin spotted the kid wearing his Halloween costume from half a month back, and started thinking a lot... the answer I got in the end was.....

"Oh yeah, I remember a long time ago during Halloween— I made Kayo-chin cry."

Ah...

When I remembered this.....

Rin couldn't help but get lost in her thoughts.

I was just about to get a really interesting idea from the Halloween pumpkin baron too, but.....

In the end, all Rin could think of was the memory of the day when Rin made Kayo-chin cry yet again.

Sigh.

Kayo-chin probably lost her patience towards a Rin like that a long time ago, nya—



When Kayo-chin and Rin were still in elementary school.

The children's hall nearby was going to organize a parade during Halloween.

All of the children would gather at the children's hall on that day, regardless of whether they went there frequently or not, and everyone would follow the instructor to parade around—that said, it was actually just an activity where you walked around the street.

Everyone just wanted to get the participation prize at the end of the parade, which was a candy bag full of candies.

That day, in the middle of our platoon, there was a huge papier-mâché prop made just for Halloween—which was a pumpkin lantern puppet that kinda imitated the feel of a Disneyland parade.

Summer break had already ended, and so had the autumn sports day; the only thing left to look forward to was Santa Claus coming in Christmas. For Rin at that time, during this empty and boring period, Halloween was like a small recreation activity. Huh? Now that I think about it, isn't that the same for Rin right now?

Rin has been looking for fun things to do since she was young!

So that time, Rin was really excited too...



That Halloween, Rin—as a first-time parade participant—was dressed up as a monster.

Rin put on a white bed sheet, a ghoul mask, and a witch hat, which was the only thing that felt Halloween-like.

After all, if it's Halloween, it has to be scary!

To be honest, Rin wanted to be a rotting zombie that could make everyone scared from the bottom of their heart. But Rin probably couldn't draw on

makeup that scary, so she'll have to take a step back and become a monster this time.

All the children gathered here had really unique costumes, and Rin, amidst this group of kids, had a bed sheet over her head, plus a mask that resembles Munch's The Scream. So, I couldn't really see the surroundings clearly, and it took a lot effort just to walk around.

There were a lot of students from Otonokizaka Elementary among the participants; some local kids from the other schools came too, and some mothers even brought their little children who were not even old enough for kindergarten to play here, too~

Ah, speaking of which, I think Eli-chan was there too!

Rin remembered.

Right before the parade started, many monsters with small heads gathered at the park in front of the children's hall, which served as a gathering spot.

Rin saw a girl with golden ponytail there, wearing a set of fake big fangs, a dancing skeleton doodle on her face, and a vampire-esque black cape. She stood out a lot, just like an authentic western style omurice~

Rin just thought her hair was really nice, but upon taking a closer look, it turned out that it was the famous Eli-chan in our school, due to her grandmother being Russian, nya.

“Wow~ Just like a real vampire, nya!”

Kayo-chin said that she's two years older than us, so it's better not to approach her. But Rin, who gets attracted to anything new and interesting, abandoned Kayo-chin , and immediately went to hit up Eli-chan (Ah, but Rin thinks Kayo-chin was just scared of the charming vampire costume that Eli-chan had, nya).

“Eli-chan's vampire costume sure is nyamazing!”

“Is it? Thanks for the compliment.”

Eli-chan thanked me and smiled, revealing her big fangs made of corrugated paper.

“Blonde hair really comes in handy at time like this, nya! I’m so envious, nya! Eli-chan dressing up as a vampire looks just like a foreigner, that’s so cool, nya~♪”

Looking at Eli-chan closely, her snow white skin and her black clothing was so cool, it made Rin more and more excited. Eli-chan giggled awkwardly, and said:

“Hm~ I look like a foreigner after dressing up? That’s the first time I’ve heard that. So, do I normally not look like a foreigner to you?”

Eli-chan made a slightly serious face at Rin after saying that.

“I was born with blonde hair, so I thought that even if I didn’t dress up like this, I still looked pretty much like a foreigner. I kept being mistaken for a foreigner who can’t speak Japanese because of this, too... but I’m already used to it, so I don’t really mind.”

Rin felt confused.

“Eh~ But Eli-chan’s name is in kanji, and you speak fluent Japanese too... Does the Eli-chan like this seemed like a foreigner?”

Rin have never thought about that before.

After all Rin and Eli-chan are in different school years, and we’ve never been in the same group in cross-year activities too, so Rin wasn’t really acquainted with Eli-chan. But, Eli-chan is a big sister from the same school as us!

Saying that she’s like a foreigner— doesn’t that sound weird?

Her blonde hair is just normal blonde hair.

Her skin colour is just a little paler.

But her eye colour is really light: it’s really pretty and looks just like a cat’s, which makes Rin a little envious...

Huh? I think my mind was a little jumbled.

That’s weird. Did Rin say something strange?

“Ugh~ Sorry, Rin doesn’t really know what makes someone a foreigner. But, Eli-chan’s hair looks really good today! Rin just wanted to say that, nya♪”

After hearing what Rin said, Eli-chan gave me a huge grin.

“Thank you, Rin-chan. I’m really glad that you praised me like this, and actually I think so, too. My costume today is not bad, right?”

She did a spin, showing off her costume after saying that, and laughed heartily.

Oh what, turns out Eli-chan was actually pretty confident in herself, nya ♥

“I actually don’t like this too eye-catching blonde hair of mine, but it’s handy at times like this. I was thinking about whether I should pull out of the Halloween parade lineup this year, since I’m already in 6<sup>th</sup> grade..... But then the elementary school teacher invited me to join, so I still came anyway... but I’m glad I came here after all. Heheh. Oh yeah, since it’s not often that I can do this, I’ll be the scariest vampire in the parade today and scare everyone! Trick or treat♪ Oh, Rin-chan will be walking with us too, right? Let’s compete to see who’ll get the most Halloween biscuits from the shops~!”

Eli-chan finished, and passed a little ziplock plastic bag to Rin, which was filled with thick, fresh red... blood?

“YAAAAAAAHHHHHHH—“

Rin screamed out of fear, yet Eli-chan mischievously said:

“This is a special blood made from salad oil. I was thinking of putting it by my mouth during the children’s hall activities later, so I’ll look like a real vampire to scare people. Rin-chan should try it too, if you don’t mind.”

Eli-chan grinned again after saying that, generously revealing her big, big fangs. And then—

“ Good luck !”

Good luck... Eli-chan at that time gave a thumbs up and winked. Even now, Rin still thinks that level of maturity was unlike any elementary student; it was

so cool, nya~ ☆

Later, Eli-chan joined her companions from the same school year as her.

Watching her from the back, Rin thought of something, nya.

Eli-chan sure is full of energy — ☆♪

### Comments ♥ Honoka

Halloween is Honoka's favourite, too! Dressing up and strolling in the streets with friends was really fun. Even though Honoka and Rin-chan attended the same elementary school, sadly Honoka has never participated in a Halloween parade before. Why, you ask?! Obviously, that's because my family shop needed people to help. Wehhh. My house is a red bean bun shop, right, so it became a target for children when it was Halloween and we'd be especially busy, so in the end it became Honoka's happy red bean paste Halloween. I strongly recommend the pumpkin bun♪

## 03♪ Rin and Kayo-chin (part 2)

“Trick or treat!”

The parade has finally begun.

If you don’t give me a treat, I’ll trick you~

Everyone was repeating the same motto as they walked together.

But, this was a little different from what Rin imagined it to be.

Everyone only quietly muttered the trick or treat motto every now and then, and the huge black flag on the float that was waved every so often...

Rin was staring blankly at the flag from the corner of her eyes that time, so Rin was actually pretty absent-minded during the parade.

Because they said this activity would be a Halloween dress up parade, Rin was originally really excited, and really looking forward to how big this event would be.

But to put it frankly, it’s just begrudgingly putting up an act around the giant Halloween pumpkin puppet float— and everyone was just randomly walking around it.

How should I put it... it’s kind of like those festivals in the street, but without the liveliness.

It was so different from the Halloween that Rin imagined in her mind.

Rin thought that during Halloween, everyone was supposed to properly dress up as a monster, witch or zombie, those kind of scary costumes that you can think of, and shout “Trick or Treeaaaatt!” wholeheartedly to scare people. Rin always thought that everyone would go around scaring the adults on the street while surrounded by screams of “Ahhh~!” and “So scary~!”— but that guess was quite off.

This kind of parade is totally different from the Halloween that Rin watched on the TV show “Sesame Street” !

So— probably because Rin had this little resistance in her.

During the parade, Rin saw a little kitten taking a walk. And as usual, Rin immediately had a reaction.

“Ah, it’s a kitty!”

Rin’s attention was taken instantly.

As soon as Rin got close, the kitten immediately ran.

“Ah, wait, hold up! Why are you running—“

Normally when I meet a kitten, even though they will keep their guard up, when they see Rin meowing while approaching them, they will still at least stop and faintly “meow~” back, so why did it just instantly run away this time?

Now that I think about it, it must be because that time, Rin had a bed sheet all over her on top of wearing a monster mask, so the kitten couldn’t recognize Rin under all that Halloween dress-up. But at the time, Rin didn’t even think about it. Rin was really bored that time, so when she saw the kitten running away, she was really shocked...

“Wait wait wait, don’t run~! Kitty~!”

Rin chased after it with all her might.

Crossing strangers’ house corridors, running past branched roads, slipping through the gaps between big buildings, sneaking into someone’s backyard...

Huh—?

By the time Rin noticed...

She was in a very unfamiliar place.

“There’s no one around.”

I couldn’t see where the Halloween parade was.

“Oh no, Rin got separated from everybody...”

At times like this, Rin would always look for Kayo-chin.

That's because Rin and Kayo-chin are childhood friends who have always been together since we were children.

Of course, Rin came along with Kayo-chin for the Halloween parade.

Kayo-chin knows that Rin gets lost a lot.

So, Kayo-chin must have noticed that Rin was missing. But Kayo-chin is a good kid, so she definitely wouldn't leave the platoon, and would just follow along the platoon while looking for Rin.

Hey~ Kayo-chin, where are you~?

Rin tried shouting loudly.

Where are you where are you where are you?

Ugh~ What should I do?

I don't know where she is at all.

Rin used the secret searching radar on her head to search for Kayo-chin, but to no avail. Eh~ Rin read a magazine some time ago saying that twin sisters have telepathy between them, it would be nyaice if Rin could use that skill now. Simply being childhood friends... doesn't work, nya? Ugh~ I wish Rin and Kayo-chin had been born as twins.

If that was the case, then Rin would have something in her making some sort of reaction for these kind of situations... Just as Rin was imagining things.

Trick or treat—

The faint, pathetic sounds of children could be heard from far away.

The chants sounded and faded intermittently, and then sounded again—

“Ah, they’re over there!”

Heheh, Rin has really good hearing nya’know!

Rin followed the source of the sound, passing by unfamiliar streets one after another.

After this corner, then definitely...

“Ah, there they are!”

The Halloween parade platoon could be seen.

Rin saw Kayo-chin in the platoon looking around restlessly; she looked like she was about to cry.

She must be looking for Rin.

Seeing her like this made Rin sigh in relief, feeling a little happy.

So happy that my cheeks were almost perking up.

Kayo-chin gave her all to look for the missing Rin, she looked so determined and cute too, which made Rin really, really happy.

Rin secretly looked at her, feeling really pleased.

Because the person Kayo-chin tried so, so hard to find, is Rin!

Kayo-chin—

Rin wanted to call out to her, but suddenly hesitated.

Right.

Today is Halloween.

Let’s give Kayo-chin a scare ☆

Originally wanting to return to the platoon, Rin quickly hid behind the big building again.

“Rin-chan~ Where are you~? Are you lost? Rin-chan~!”

Kayo-chin passed by in front of Rin, shouting faintly.

Even though she was looking for her missing friend, her voice was still really small.

It almost got overshadowed by the parade and the noises from the cars passing by.

U h-uh~ That won't do, Kayo-chin.

How could the stray Rin hear you like that!

Rin giggled thinking about it. Kayo-chin really can't not have Rin with her~♪

So, Rin ran a check through her costume.

Monster mask OK, bed sheet is also OK, nice! Next is raising both arms up, and leave the hands hanging. It won't look like a monster if I don't pose properly.

Oh yeah! And the blood I got from Eli-chan just now!

Rin just remembered this existed.

I can put it on my hands...and smear it on the bed sheet and mask, making blood trails all over.

Wow— I think it'll be really scary!

Even Rin thinks it'll be a really charming bloody terror!

Okay, this will definitely make Kayo-chin jump.

If I say "It's actually Rin~" after scaring her, she'll surely turn from being scared to laughing loudly, nya~♪

"Mon~ ster~ is~ here~! Give me a treat or I'll eat you~"

Rin jumped into the street, exclaiming.

"KYAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!"

Rin just heard the most exaggerated, highest decibel screech she has ever heard in her entire life.

In front of Rin was Kayo-chin with her eyes at their widest.

“Kyaaa— No, monster..... Don’t come here, no no no nooooo~!”

Kayo-chin ran away crying.

“Ah, w-wait up!”

Wait up Kayo-chin, it’s Rin— it’s the Rin you’ve been looking so hard for~!

Rin thought, but Kayo-chin’s sprinting speed really is too fast. With the bed sheet slowing her down, Rin couldn’t catch up with her at all.

After chasing her for a while— phew.

Rin stopped dumbfoundedly.

“What the, Kayo-chin actually... runs really fast.....”

I mumbled to myself.

If she normally ran this fast, she wouldn’t always have to be the ghost when we played tag.

As Rin was thinking about that...

Trick or treat—

The weak motto chanting rose again behind me.

Ah, oh no, if this goes on Kayo-chin will become lost, too!

Rin quickly started running again, chasing down Kayo-chin who ran away at super high speed.

“Ah, found her ♥”

Surprisingly, Kayo-chin was staying right at the park nearby.

She leaned against the fence around the park , adjusting her out-of-breath breathing from the intense escape earlier.

Really Kayo-chin, if your stamina is so weak, you're gonna get caught immediately , y'know.

Should I ask her to join Rin for morning jogs, so that she can successfully run far far away from monsters?

Rin thought as she secretly approached her, and said:

“Ka~yo-chin~!”

Rin hugged Kayo-chin playfully.

“KYAAAAAAA!”

A miserable screech responded to Rin again.

Huh? Why?

Rin was actually a little hurt by it this time. I know it was really sudden just now, that's why she's this scared ... Kayo-chin, it's Rin.

Kayo-chin struggled in Rin's arms. She desperately fought back ; she was really terrified.

“Monster! Noo! Please don't eat Hanayo— no no no no, go away! Save me please~ Rin-chan—! Rin-chan, where are you—!”

Ah ...

Deep inside, Rin's heart skipped a little.

Kayo-chin yelled loudly, and even cried.

Yet, the wailing Kayo-chin was calling for Rin.

“It's Rin, not a monster! Kayo-chin, I'm sorry.”

Rin quickly took off the bed sheet and mask on her, and in the next second, Kayo-chin stopped moving immediately.

She turned to look at Rin with her tear-stained face.

“Rin.... - chan?”

“I’m sorry! Just now Rin got lost chasing a kitty again. Rin only found her way back because Rin heard Kayo-chin calling for her , nya!”

See, I’m completely okay! After seeing Rin’s exaggerated body gestures, Kayo-chin finally smiled a little.

“That’s great, Rin-chan. Hanayo was worried the entire time just now if you were in trouble because you got lost again.”

Even though Kayo-chin’s face was still full of tears ,

She was genuinely happy that Rin wa s safe.

Rin felt a sting in her chest.

“I’m sorry... that I went as far as scaring you just now.”

Hearing Rin saying that, Kayo-chin quickly replied:

“Hanayo should be the one saying sorry. I didn’t notice the monster was actually Rin-chan.”

Kayo-chin said as she spread out the bed sheet that was covering Rin earlier, looking over it a few times.

“I actually thought it was a monster, so I was completely fooled.”

Kayo-chin giggled softly, and gently caressed Rin’s face.

“Even though Rin-chan was under it all the while..... I’m really sorry.”

Faced with Kayo-chin sincerely apologizing, Rin felt really awkward, and uncomfortable.

Rin should be the one apologizing.

Even though I want to say that properly.

Kayo-chin kept apologizing for not recognizing Rin.

I’m sorry, for making Rin r u n all the way to th is kind of place.

I'm sorry, it's all because of my timidity, being too scared of monsters, that I only cared about running away, that things ended up like this.

I'm sorry, the monster costume was too scary with the blood on it, that Hanayo didn't even consider it would be Rin-chan under it. But, in the end I still found Rin-chan, I'm really glad ...

Hanayo apologized non-stop while crying.

So Rin couldn't say anything ...

In the end she only managed to say one sentence :

"Let's go back to the parade platoon?"

Sigh.

Rin was completely defeated by Kayo-chin.

Why is Kayo-chin like this?

Rin is really ...

Rin is really ...

Really sorry about it.

Rin silently reflected inside.

And then— made a resolution .

I will never ever pretend to be a monster and scare Kayo-chin again.

Contrary to that, Rin wants to protect Kayo-chin who is so afraid of monsters.

Rin will do her very very very best to protect Kayo-chin!

Although Rin always just does whatever she thinks of, and always gets told to think before I do anything by my parents, Kayo-chin is different.

We've been together since we were small, even though Rin constantly gets herself into troubles, but no matter what Rin does, Kayo-chin is always this kind and gentle ... For this gentle Kayo-chin.....

Okay, Rin has decided!

For the Halloween costume next year, Rin will be a superhero who protects Kayo-chin!

And then follow closely behind her, protecting her from the monsters and witches that scare her!

And Rin definitely won't be lost again , too ☆

Just as Rin was getting pumped up, and was starting to get happy...

“Ah, it’s a mantis!”

Rin found a big mantis slowly moving in a corner of the flowerbed in the park.

“Whoa, it’s really rare to find a mantis around this season. It’s really big! Is it a mama mantis with a lot of eggs in her stomach?”

So Rin immediately ran over happily...

And quietly approached the mantis’ belly with her fingers, while taking care to not get attacked by the huge scythe.

Success♪ Caught it!

“Kayo-chin, look, this super amazing mantis~ Oh yeah! I’ll give this to Kayo-chin to make up for the trouble today.”

Rin said happily, and handed the big mantis over in front of Kayo-chin.

Kayo-chin’s expression slowly froze.

And broke down crying immediately the next second.

“Uwaaaaahhhh— The mantis is so scary—“



Sigh.

Rin agrees with what Maki-chan said: it'll be better if Rin is a little bit smarter.

It would be nice if I could just ask Maki-chan for some of her intelligence—even if it's just a little bit, it would be really nice if she can give some to Rin.

### Comments ❤️ Kotori

Kotori completely understands how Rin feels about getting defeated by Hanayo-chan ❤️ Hanayo-chan who can remain gentle and kind no matter what happens, and Rin-chan who is a little mischievous and playful. It looks like Rin-chan is always leading Hanayo-chan at first glance, but it's actually kind of not like that at all♪ Speaking of which, just by looking at Rin-chan's Halloween story about you girls, it makes Kotori a little restless ❤️ I hope that someday when μ's comes up with a Halloween song, we can film a masquerade-themed PV! Just leave the costume preparation to Kotori ❤️

## 04. Rin and One Night's Mistake

“Ah, a shooting star.”

As soon as Rin pointed towards the sky, Nozomi-chan laughed out loud.

“It feels like ever since ya got here, shooting stars started appearing more frequently. Does that mean you’re a goddess of luck? Or a goddess of plague that keeps making the lucky stars fall...”

Nozomi-chan said as she giggled.

Right now, we’re on Otonokizaka High School’s rooftop.

It has always been the place for μ’s practices, but once it hits 8pm, it’ll become pitch black— it looks like a completely different place.

Even though summer is almost over, today is still really hot. But, as if it accidentally broke in, a fresh breeze accompanied by the smell of autumn...

...blew across the dark night sky.

Tonight... was the last practice of μ’s summer camp.



We held a two-days-one-night in-school training camp this time because we were going to hold the next concert soon, and decided to do one last strengthening training, although... Rin feels like it’s because summer break was almost over and everyone felt a little lonely, so we wanted to gather together and play , nya.

Our in-school training camp is us renting a mattress and blanket, and then having a sleepover in the classroom — this kind of simple training.

Because it's a simple two-days-one-night training camp, we started the practice as soon as we gathered at 7am, ate lunch that we brought ourselves, had a tea time at 3pm with desserts each of us brought over (Rin brought baked pudding that she strongly recommends!), and cooked curry together in the cooking classroom for dinner— and we'll have takeout for tomorrow's lunch , nya!

Ahaha ~ I'm so excited♪

Which shop should we eat at tomorrow?

Although Kayo-chin said she wanted rice balls, it's not often we get training camps — isn't it too boring to just eat some kind of normal lunch like that? We practiced nonstop , so no matter if it's morning, afternoon, or night, we'll be super - starved. Rin wanted to eat the big - sized fried prawn Salisbury steak lunch that the mobile stalls sells outside of our school more..... Ah! The Chinese takeout ramen our teachers often ate in the staff office sounds good too , nya! Rin has always wanted to try that~

Every time Rin got called to the staff office for her homework problems, Rin could vaguely smell pork bone soy sauce ramen around lunch time. After all , Otonokizaka High School doesn't have its own canteen , so students can never have piping hot food — of course I would want to try it. Oh~ I'm drooling just from thinking about it, better suck it back♪

No no, didn't we just eat a huge bowl of extra-sugar super - sweet curry that Honoka-chan made using her secret recipe ? !

With the break time after dinner coming to an end, it's about time that we head to the sports complex for our nighttime practice.

The sports complex is normally occupied by the volleyball club and table tennis club, so we in μ's don't have many chances to have it all to ourselves; Rin was full of energy from her excitement. Also, the sports complex has a huge mirror wall, so we can see our own dance moves clearly!

But, huh? Nozomi-chan— where did she disappear to?

"Rin'll go look for her, nya!"

Rin said after noticing Nozomi-chan was nowhere to be found, and left the classroom ...



Washroom, staff room, third-year classroom and shower room— Rin looked in all sorts of places. I thought it was pretty unlikely that she would be at our usual practice ground on the rooftop, so I went there last.

And I found Nozomi-chan there.

As soon as I opened the only metal door leading to the rooftop by the stairs, the cool night air blasted Rin instantly.

Whoo— it's already this chilly!

Rin ran towards the centre of the rooftop, throwing her arms open— and looked around.

Nozomi-chan was right at the west wing of the rooftop. It's the place where you can see the view below the clearest on the peak of Otonokizaka's building, which was built on top of a hill.

Oh, what— there you are, nya.

Rin was surprised that Nozomi-chan didn't head over to the sports complex already, since we rarely have the chance to practice there ...

"Nozomi-chan, our nyaitime practice is about to start—"

Rin said to Nozomi-chan by the metal door of the rooftop staircase.

Nozomi-chan was emitting a peaceful aura which was different than usual, lying alone in the middle of the rooftop ... But, Rin gazed at her.....

And thought that her figure was... really beautiful.

Rin approached un consciously.

It was at this moment, that a ray of light blinked past.

A shooting star shined in front of Rin, and disappeared immediately.



Nozomi-chan said , laughing: "Since you saw that many shooting stars, you must be a goddess of plague." Rin isn't some kind of goddess of plague— Rin originally wanted to retort back.

But for some reason, Rin suddenly thought that was funny too, and started laughing along.

"Is it goddess of luck or plague , nya~ I my self don't know either, nya. Ah — but I ha ve been seeing shooting stars pretty often since I was little. Maybe the spirits of shooting star s really like me . After all , the word ' starry sky ' is in my name ☆"

Rin purposely st ruck her signature ' Courage Rin Rin Hoshizora Rin !' victory sign pose, while doing a little dance for Nozomi-chan . Then Nozomi-chan , who was still lying on the floor , laughed heartily.

“As expected of the only person who can rival Honoka’s energy♪”

Huh... what’s happening?

The night wind—

...made a rustling sound as it blew past us.

It feels like making Nozomi-chan laugh today made Rin extra happy ☆

“But, Nozomi-chan is really lucky too, right? You’ve seen many shooting stars since you were little too, nya? Did all your wishes come true?”

Rin asked Nozomi-chan out of curiosity.

“To be honest, Rin ... even though I see shooting stars pretty often, I can’t decide what to wish for right away. Rin always gets anxious about wanting to quickly make a wish before the shooting star disappears, so much that Rin starts to panic, so I don’t manage to make a wish most of the time, nya. Heh heh heh.”

Rin scratched her head laughing as Nozomi-chan smiled while looking at her.

“I was determined to successfully make a wish next time, so I thought of a wish first so that I can just say it when I see a shooting star next time. But when I actually see a shooting star, I can only think of wanting to eat taiyaki or ramen or something. I only thought of this kind of wish in that instant, so even if the wish came true, I wouldn’t know if it’s due to the shooting star or if it’s just pure coincidence ...”

Nozomi-chan smiled even brighter now.

“Ho ho— is that so? What a shame you waste all those wishes on such silly things. But, if everyone was as easygoing as you, this world would be more peaceful. But .... I think it must be that ...”

Nozomi-chan turned over halfway saying that, looking straight up at the sky — gazing upon the stars in the night sky.

Her profile looked clear and moving.

Nozomi-chan continued:

"Y'know, I don't think it has anything to do with the star gods blessing you . I think it's because Rin-chan's surname is 'starry sky'— you look up at the stars more than other people ever since you were little."

Nozomi-chan looked more serious than usual when she said that.

She lightly nodded to herself, and continued again:

"It's probably because ya have a 'star' in your name that you naturally paid more attention to the night sky since you were young— so you look up at the sky a lot, right? If you look at the night sky more frequently, you're bound to see more shooting stars. It's surprising how these little innate qualities can affect people's lives. Take me : because I was born in a family whose members keep transferring from jobs, I have to ... transfer schools from one place to another. It even made me ... "

Nozomi-chan paused a bit.

She started looking at the sky again.

And then giggled softly, saying:

"Thanks to that, I end up randomly mixing in Kansai dialect when I talk."

Nozomi-chan gave Rin a faint smile, and went back to staring at the night sky.

Looking at this kind of Nozomi-chan, a mysterious feeling surfaced inside of Rin.

Nozomi-chan has an expression on her face that Rin has never seen before.

What... is she thinking?

I want to see what it is like in her mind.

Inside her mind— is it μ's , nya?

Even though everyone gathered here for the training camp.

Nozomi-chan is stargazing here alone.

Rin suddenly felt uneasy.

Nozomi-chan— how do you see everyone?

Unable to hold back...

Rin said those kind of words , nya.

“Nozomi-chan, are you... lonely?”

A wave of silence appeared right above Nozomi-chan.

Silently.

All the sounds ceased.

It's almost like we're in the pitch - black of outer space.

What should I do?

Did Rin say something wrong?

Although ...

It feels like a waste if you used this time to talk.

It feels like this silence... is very important.

Rin silently crouched down, and held Nozomi-chan's hand.

Why?

Rin doesn't really know either.

But it feels like Nozomi-chan wanted Rin to do this.

Eh? Or is it... Rin actually wanted to do this herself?

He he he .

Rin herself isn't sure either ☆

But ... Nozomi-chan didn't blame or make fun of Rin.

She just... didn't move. Having held her hands, Rin felt like this.

Nozomi-chan's hands are very soft, just like rice cakes that you can't resist, and it's those kind of freshly pounded big rice cakes , nya!

Nozomi-chan squeezed Rin's hand a little... but the next second.....

She started tickling Rin's palm ! Aaahhhh, it's a tickle attack!

"Nyaa— That tickles! Nozomi-chan , what are you doing, ahahahahaha—"

Jeez, Nozomi-chan is so cunning , nya.

Rin is super ticklish, nya~!

But Nozomi-chan still continued attacking Rin, who was now laughing on the ground.

"It's on ya for falling into my trap, and attacking me like that?"

Nozomi-chan grinned slyly after saying that, got up immediately, and unleashed another round of tickle attack s on Rin!

"Eek— Aah, not there, please not my tummy~! I give up! I give up! I lost, please, Nozomi-chan, stop~ it~ now~!"

Both of us lay on the ground , trying to catch our breath.

The silence from just now is already nowhere to be found.

Right now on the roof, there's only the night sky that's brightly but gently lit up by the stars, and Nozomi-chan with her usual cheery — and a little bit of— looking-down-on-you kind of smile.

"C'mon, let's go!"

Nozomi-chan didn't care about Rin tearing up from laughing, and stood up on her own.

"Huh? Go where ... "

Rin asked, dumbfounded.

"Didn't Rin-chan say it was time for our nighttime practice?"

Nozomi-chan dusted away the dirt on her skirt.

At the same time, she looked intently at Rin, who was still lying on the floor.

"What a view ~ I can see your panties ♥"

"Uwahhh —!"

Did Rin accidentally flash her favourite panties while rolling about just now?

Rin quickly tried to pull down her skirt— ah.

Rin is wearing her gym pants for practice.

"Jeez, Nozomi-chan, you liar!"

Rin stood up too, and clenched her fists, putting on an act to lightly punch her.

Nozomi-chan smiled as she grabbed Rin's hands.

"I'm not sad anymore."

She said this sentence briefly.

Huh ...?

"My lonely life... has already ended."

Nozomi-chan smiled as she finished.

“Because I met all of you.”

And then, Nozomi-chan roughly patted Rin’s head, until her hair was all ruffled.

“Wah—”

Rin should be used to this by now, but for some reason, it still gave me a shock!

“All right, let’s get going.”

Nozomi-chan turned around for real this time, and walked towards the staircase.

In the end, Rin still doesn’t really understand what Nozomi-chan is thinking. And that is the report Rin wrote after seeing Nozomi-chan in the late summer.

Feels like Nozomi-chan...

...is really hard to get, like a mysterious kitty kind of person. She must have a lot of things that Rin can’t imagine in her mind... Rin wanted to take a peek at what’s in her mind, but it feels like if I take a look, it’ll be like being in a haunted house— something scary will happen, nya.

Everyone in μ’s always tells Rin, “You’re too reckless, you never think about the outcome!”, but Nozomi-chan can actually make Rin ponder deeply; she’s really something else.

She’s just like a beautiful kitty walking on the night of a full moon with her head held high.

Cats don’t go in groups, instead preferring to go by themselves alone.

But, during a full moon night... cats will all gather together, making a cat party. And then, everyone will happily sing and dance together, enjoying their cat’s life, nya.

I hope the next time a night full of stars comes around, Rin will be able to sing with Nozomi-chan by her side.

Nozomi-chan's party time.

That summer night, Rin thought that it would be nice if μ's could go on forever and ever.

### Comments ♥ Nico

Wow~ How could Rin-chan and Nozomi-chan secretly go on a date on the rooftop, that's so sly-nico! I didn't even know you two were on a secret date during that training camp. You girls must have done something that you couldn't write in this diary~ Eek~! My heart is pumping really fast just from thinking of what you girls might have done♥ After all, Nico is an innocent idol who hasn't had her first relationship ♪♪ You two must never do this kind of thing that makes people's heart race, like being off alone in secret again. Next time, remember to invite me too ♥♥ I'll keep hitting the shutter-nico ♪

## 05♪ Rin and Kitties (part 1)

Whoosh~

A stream of cool air blew out of nowhere.

Strange?

On the way home on a certain day at the end of September...

My body felt weird. As Rin was just thinking about that...

Ah... ah... ah—

“—achoo!”

Heh heh heh, I sneezed.

Rin rubbed her nose and.....

“Ah— achoo, achoo, achoo, achoo!”

Rin is one of those people who sneezes in a row.

If Kayo-chin, who is always sticking with Rin, sees Rin sneezing in a row, she'll tease her about it too.

She said Rin's face will scrunch up and she'll close both eyes when she sneezes; that face looks just like a newborn kitty~ heh heh heh♪

Aw~ Really, is Rin as cute as a kitty~?♪ Just kidding ♥

Just as Rin was thinking about these things...

Meow~

Ah, a kitty! Rin heard a meow from a real cat.

“ Oh my , it's a kitty ~ W here are you hiding?”

Rin moved her nose , wh ich was just sucking up mucus earlier, and then bent her waist down, ready to find the kitty~!

Meow~ Meow~

When Rin was looking for it, Rin c ould still hear a very weak meowing coming from a certain place.

Hm..... it sounds like it's a really small kitty.

Is it okay, nya?

Maybe it's hungry, nya?

The k itty c ould n't have... fainted from the summer heat from a while ago, got hit by this autumn wind when it ha d n't even recovered, and then caught a fever?

“Okay, captain! Rin will now begin her journey to find the poor lost kitty!”

Rin saluted, and then got down on the ground to look for the kitty.

“Where are you? Where are you, Rin's cute little kitty? Don't be afraid, come out quickly~”

Speaking of the places nearby that cats often appear, it's that dense hedge by the house with the old tiled roof, or under the cars in the open parking lot, or the super narrow path which is roughly 30cm wide in the middle of a the cement wall in between two houses—

Rustle , rustle.

The uniform's skirt rubbed against the cement wall and Rin almost got stuck, but Rin still continued to look for the kitty.

Hey~ Come out, come out quickly , kitty!

Rin can share half of her Pringles chips with you~

Nyaa~ ♪



Rin really loves cats.

Why?

Rin has loved cats ever since she was little.

Probably because they're really cool?

Like their soft body, and the ability to jump really high without a running start.

And even if they fell head first, they could still do a really cool spin and land on their feet; as well as their elegant movements, and their upright big eyes.

Ah, they seem to have so much fun playing by themselves, too.

Rin really loves... all these features of a cat.

Every time that Rin sees a cat, she can't help but to stare at them. When Rin was little, she got lost many times too because she let go of her mom's hand to chase after a cat.

Mrow~ Meow, meow~!

The cats I met by the roadside always had this intriguing look.

I couldn't tell if they were interested in Rin or not...

Rin tried really hard to imitate their meows to chat with them; after meowing a few times, they finally softly responded back to Rin. Although they sound pretty helpless.

Meow~

Even though they're cold, Rin still felt really happy.

Rin stared at the eyes that finally responded back to her. Great, today..... today might be the day I can touch it. Rin slowly approached— but the kitty immediately turned around and escaped.

Dammit! So close.

Cats' eyes are just like big glass marbles, sparkling and watery. They're very pretty, but Rin still doesn't quite get what are they thinking.

Feels like if I keep staring at their eyes, I'll be sucked in, and it makes Rin thinks she has become one of them, but in the end she still gets straight up dumped by them.

Every time.

Sigh! Rin always thinks about this every time this happens.

Sigh!

It would be nice if Rin could become one with the cats.

Rin has had this thought ever since she was little. It's like a one-sided crush that is destined to fail, nya~



That thing... happened one day when Rin hadn't even hit ten years old yet.

It was a cold night in the middle of winter.

Because it was past New Year's, the elementary schools' winter break was about halfway through.

Christmas, New Year's Eve, and the New Year's days on January 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> that Rin had been looking forward to had all passed. Rin had become like a flat soda.

Rolling and rolling and rolling in the room.

Rice cakes, New Year's dishes, red bean cake soup, quizzes and punishment games on New Year's specials— Rin is tired of them~ As Rin was rolling about

with her cheeks puffed up, a door bell suddenly rang from the entrance.

“Rin-chan, what... what should we do...”

The person who came is none other than Rin’s childhood friend Kayo-chin; she was wearing a pure white wool hat, shivering all over.

“Whoa~ What’s wrong? Rin wasn’t expecting Kayo-chin at this time. But that’s great, Rin was bored, so let’s eat some rice cakes and play kids’ mahjong —”

Rin said as she opened the entrance door, and reached out to pat the wool on Kayo-chin’s hat .

Huh? It’s so cold— it’s snow!

There’s a layer of light snow covering the top of the pure white hat— it’s the snow that fell in large flakes just now.

The huge dark purple and blue sky behind Kayo-chin is raining white snow that looked like flower petals.

“Ah~ It’s snowing, it should be getting cold! Hurry up and come in, Kayo-chin.”

Even after Rin finished, Kayo-chin still hasn’t moved a single step from the cement floor at the entrance, shivering as she said:

“Rin-chan— what should we do? I think under our house’s storeroom, there’s a bunch of newborn kittens.”

EEEEHH! Newborn... kittens?

Rin still remembers even now, that time she was so shocked her eyes could fly out.

I originally thought Kayo-chin was shivering because of the cold, but the real reason was not even about the sudden drop in temperature at night. It’s from the surprise of suddenly discovering the newborn litter, on top of being in the middle of a snowing winter— it was from the fear that formed after hearing the energetic meowing slowly becoming weaker and weaker.

“I think a stray cat got into our house and gave birth to them. Even though I could hear them since yesterday, today I noticed their sounds were getting softer... the storeroom is in the very cold north side, so I think we need to move them to somewhere warmer... but Daddy and Mommy are not home because of work, and Grandpa and Grandma also went to the town council meeting. Rin-chan, what should we do? The kitties’ noises are already so weak, and it even started snowing now; if this goes on, the kitties might..... they might die...”

Kayo-chin nearly cried when she finished.

Rin silently moved close to Kayo-chin and wiped her tears away.

Kayo-chin didn’t stop Rin, she just closed her eyes holding in her tears.

Rin immediately took a scarf from the hangers and wrapped it around Kayo-chin’s neck.

The gloves and feather-woven coat Rin bought during the new year are getting put into use for the first time too!

“Mommy, I’m going to Kayo-chin’s house! There are newborn kittens!”

Rin yelled at the entrance, and closed the door before even receiving a response. And then immediately inhaled the cold air of the night that hurts deep inside the nose.

Rin held Kayo-chin’s hand and started running.

“Let’s go, Kayo-chin! Super-Fast Express~”

Kayo-chin said to Rin who started running:

“Rin..... Rin-chan, wait up. You’re running..... running too fast—”

Even though I can vaguely hear Mommy’s “You’ll disturb people this late, Rin—” voice coming from behind Kayo-chin.

But now is not the time for that!

Kayo-chin and cats. Rin’s two most important friends in the world are now in big trouble! Super-Fast Express Number Rin, full speed ahead ☆

## Comments ♥ Nozomi

So that's the reason why Rin-chan likes cats ~ I like cats too. Cats are sensitive to the energy field of things: like when I'm walking on the street, I also feel that places with cats are hidden with good fortunes. So if I see any cats around the corner, I'll think that there's a new spiritual place and follow along. After all, fortune cats have been around for ages. Even though the cat was late and didn't manage to be listed in the twelve zodiacs, I think their proud solitary attitude is pretty cool too. If I were to keep a cat or dog as a pet, I'd want a cat more ♥ I don't need to take it out for walks too — saves me some work ♪

## 06♪ Rin and Kitties (part 2)

“It’s over there—“

Passing through the old gate with the tiled roof, Rin followed Kayo-chin’s guidance, and reached the backyard behind the main house.

Since I’ve been here so many times to play, to Rin, Kayo-chin’s backyard is as familiar as Rin’s own house. I heard there used to be a warehouse in the backyard, but now it’s just a really big storeroom.

“Can you hear it?”

Kayo-chin asked anxiously.

Hm?

Rin lay down on the ground before the storeroom, perked her ears up and listened carefully— and heard a really weak noise.

Mew.

Mew mew mew ~

“It’s true! There really are kittens’ noises!”

It’s also Rin’s first time hearing this kind of sound. So this is what baby kitties sound like— they’re sooo tiny!

The sound was so helpless, weak, and fragile, almost as if it would disappear at any moment.

Rin took a deep breath— heart pumping wildly.

Rin reached out her hand to suppress her suddenly increased heartbeat.

“We have to save them!”

Kayo-chin stared at Rin’s face.

“But... how do we save them?”

Her voice started shaking towards the end ; it sounded like she was about to cry.

How do we save them?

After being asked, Rin crossed her arms and just started to think.

Hmm ...

The storeroom of Kayo-chin 's house is really huge : at first glance, it looks like a small , square side room.

However, the entrance is one of those huge board sliding door s with no windows, and there's only a really small window that you can't reach on the north side of this building, kind of like th e little window in a restroom . There was a huge lock pad on the handle of the door, and the window is so tiny and high up that even if we opened up the window, only kittens... can actually get through it!

“No keys?”

Hearing Rin asking, the almost-crying Kayo-chin shook her head.

“Usually G randma keeps it, so Hanayo do es n't know where she put it.”

Kayo-chin sagged her shoulders.

Oh yeah... Rin thought while looking at the only window access into the storeroom.

“This... might do.”

Rin thought of it. If she imitates the cats that she has always looked up to, she might be able to get inside.

So then, Rin took a few steps back, and lowered her body into a pre-running posture.

Okay, even if knowing this probably doesn't work, Rin still wants to try it.

"Go—!"

Rin sprinted, and high-jumped towards the north wall.

"Uwaaahhhh~!"

Because Rin accidentally put in too much force, she turned around quickly, to avoid hitting the wall directly with her face— t hud!

Rin ended up brutally hitting the wall with her back.

" Ow ow ow —"

What should I do? I couldn't even touch the window frame, let alone getting into the gap in the tiny window.

"Al I right, again!"

Kayo-chin quickly stopped Rin , who wanted to sprint again.

"Rin-chan, it's no use, you'll definitely hit the wall again."

She's right, but if this goes on, the kittens will ...

Rin knows.

Doesn't matter if it's human babies or cat babies — because their bodies are so small, if we don't help keep them warm, they'll lose temperature.

The weather is so cold, so if we don't get them out soon, their warmth will get lower and lower, and the kittens— they might die!

.....

Rin was shocked.

Her heartbeat increased as she thought about it.

Rin silently stared at the snow slowly falling down.

Feels like she can almost hear the loud “whoosh—” sound of a huge snowfall coming from nowhere.

But today was a quiet night in January.

And then, Rin noticed something.

“Kayo-chin, what should we do? I couldn’t hear the meows from the kittens since just now!”

Both of us perked up our ears to listen— but we couldn’t pick up anything.

Rin realized what the silence could mean this night, and started panicking.

“Kayo-chin, what do we do ? Kittens..... the kittens—“

Rin was on the edge of crying.

Rin shuffled repeatedly on the spot uneasily, even though doing this wouldn’t make the kittens feel any better. But..... but but but— what should we do!

At this moment, Kayo-chin hugged Rin tightly.

“Rin-chan, don’t panic! It’s okay, because today— I actually couldn’t hear them a few times. They must be sleeping right now.”

Hearing Kayo-chin’s soothing and gentle voice, Rin calmed down a bit.

“So... Sorry, Kayo-chin, I’m a little nervous ... But.....”

Seeing Rin’s serious expression, Kayo-chin’s expression dimmed slightly.

“Kayo-chin is right, they probably fell asleep. But it’s nighttime now, so their sound seems to be getting weaker and weaker, and if we don’t save them now ...”

Kayo-chin thoughtfully said:

“I wonder if we can get in from here?”

With that said, Kayo-chin quietly pointed in the direction she was talking about to Rin— it’s under the flooring.

The old-style storeroom at Kayo-chin 's house has a gap between the floor and the ground: a patch of soil with big rocks in it can be seen below the flooring from in between the pillars lifting up the storeroom.

Then Kayo-chin swiftly lowered her head, brushing past the door frame , and looked at the space under the flooring. When she got back up , there were some dirt on her face.

“U rgh , my arms are not long enough. But they seem to be right down there.”

Rin too quickly laid on the ground, looking inside.

Deep inside the humid, pitch black space with a musty smell, you can hear—

Mew~ M ew~

The weak mewing of the kittens.

“—!”

The kittens are in there! Still alive!

Rin is suddenly filled with power.

“ I'm going inside!”

Before Kayo-chin could stop her , Rin was already twitching her body, wanting to get deeper — but her shoulders w ould still get caught, so she couldn't proceed at all.

“This won't work, Rin-chan. Not to mention , it's so dark down there, and there must be a lot of centipedes, lizards , and bugs. I think we need to wait for G randma to get back—”

Mew~ Mew~

At this moment, the kitten's mewing suddenly rang in Rin's mind.

"No way! The kittens might die while we're waiting!"

The snow that only started falling just now has already covered the tops of the camellias in the yard of Kayo-chin's in a thin white blanket.

Seeing this scene, Kayo-chin shivered a bit.

"If only the kittens... had a blanket to cover them."

Hearing Kayo-chin's mumbling, Rin suddenly had an idea.

"That's it!"

Rin took off the sweater she was wearing, took the dustpan with a long handle used to clean up the snow in the yard, and rolled up the sweater into a ball, putting it at the front of the dustpan.

And then gently sent the dustpan into the gap under the flooring ...

"Nya~ Ny~ I'm sending you kittens a warm blanket~"

"I hope they know that they can use the sweater for warmth ... "

I'm not sure when Kayo-chin had crouched beside Rin; she also looked worriedly under the flooring.

"Nya~ Ny~ Don't be scared, it's warm; you guys can come into Rin's brand of kitty blanket, rest assured. Hang in there — we'll definitely find a way to get you all out, so you have to be good and get warmed up ~"

Rin said in a singing tone, pushing the dustpan even further in—

"Mrow~"

An especially loud meow sounded from inside.

"Ah!"

“They responded!”

Rin and Kayo-chin both couldn’t help but to look at each other.

Rin temporarily put down the dustpan so as to not frighten them, and waited quietly with Kayo-chin. And so we waited— about fifteen minutes.

“I wonder if they took the sweater away already.”

Rin gently pulled out the dustpan.

And the blue sweater Rin put on the dustpan was still on it.

“Mew~ Mew~”

“Mrow~”

A very, very tiny meow sounded from inside of the sweater.

“Aaaaahhh! The kittens!”

Rin and Kayo-chin couldn’t help but to scream, and then quickly covered each other’s mouth afterwards.

At the same time, a cat dragged its heavy feet and walked out of the space under the flooring alone— it was the pure white stray cat that often appears around here, Kira-chan (named by Rin).

Kayo-chin softly said in surprise:

“So Kira-chan is their mom ...”

Kira-chan looked into Rin’s eyes, and meowed:

“Mrrrooooow—”

Her voice was very clear.

This was the first time in her life that Rin felt like she understood what a cat was saying.

She said to save her children.

Rin thought she must be saying this. So ...

“We need to bring them into the house for milk!”

The kittens squished inside the sweater were really light— they looked so tiny and fragile, and with their pure white fur, it felt like they could become transparent at any moment, and then disappear , just like that.

Even though they were so fragile that makes people scared to touch ...

Rin and Kayo-chin looked at each other, determined.

Kira-chan willingly entrusted the cute and tiny animal s to us, so for her, we have to help these kittens!

After entering the house, we didn’t take the kittens out from the sweater, but instead put them in a warm place right away to avoid scaring them. Taking a closer look now, there were five newborn kittens in total. Three of them kept opening and closing their little pink mouths, while the other two hadn’t even opened their eyes yet.

This is the first time in Rin’s life... that she’s seeing such a small life.

“Whoa ... “

Rin was so touched that she couldn’t help but to gently poke out her finger, wanting to caress them.

Suddenly, one of the kittens who still hadn’t opened its eyes yet approached Rin’s finger with its tiny , tiny mouth.

“Ah! I got licked.”

Rin felt a pinch in her heart— and then, Rin decided.

Rin definitely , definitely..... definitely will save these small kittens!

After declaring that to Kayo-chin, Rin raised her fist high up to prove her determination, but then— a choo! Rin suddenly made a huge sneeze, surprising herself.

Kayo-chin said:

“Rin-chan , you took off your sweater, so that’s why you sneezed from the cold. Oh yeah, just so you don’t catch a fever, I’ll go make you a cup of hot milk now.”

Wow~ Hot milk♪

Hearing that Kayo-chin will make Rin a cup of hot milk, she got really happy.

“Kitties, that’s great — Kayo-chin said she’ll make hot milk for us.”

And then she said to the kittens:

“The sweet hot milk. Just from a little sip, it will definitely get your spirits up. Rin really likes it too. So you guys should drink more—“

Rin had n’t finished.

Meow~

The little guy let out a meow.

It’s the kitty whose forehead Rin gently touched earlier.

“Whoa~ He responded to Rin!”

“That’s right , nya~! You guys should drink more , nya~! Rin will feed you all a lot of milk , nya~~!”

Rin quickly said, and they responded once again :

Meow~ Meow~ Meow~

The kittens let out a sharp meow with their almost nonexistent voice.

Wow~ Amazing! Amazing! Rin is talking with the kittens!

And then Rin snuggled in a blanket and drank the hot milk that Kayo-chin prepared with the kittens afterwards, and tried her best to chat with the kittens .

Every time Rin let out a “meow”, the kittens w ould respond. Using a straw to send the milk into the tiny , tiny mouths of the tiny kittens, they seem to be slowly recovering their strength too.

“Nya~ N ya~! Drink more , nya! Little kittens should drink more so you’ll have more energy , nya! Later, when you all grow up, you should play~ with~ Rin~♪ Rin is looking forward to that day too , nya! ”

Seeing Rin meowing nonstop, Kayo-chin at the side couldn’t help but to giggle.

— a choo!

Rin sneezed again.

Ughh... seems like someone is badmouthing Rin~? As Rin thought about that, the telephone in Kayo-chin’s house rang.

“Ahhh, if it’s M ommy, help me tell M ommy that I’ll be staying at Kayo-chin’s place today~!”

Rin said, and quickly sn uck back into the blanket to pet the kittens’ heads.

“Cute kitties, come be the children of Rin’s house hold when you grow up. And then Rin will be the kitties’ mom , nya~ ♥♥”



After that, even though Rin and Kayo-chin did everything they could to take care of the kittens — we're not sure if it's because they were born in the middle of a winter night that was un suitable for them , or if it was due to low temperature s— in the end , only three out of the five of them survived .

The ones that didn't make it were the two that licked Rin's finger with their small mouths — their eyes had n't even opened.

Rin and Kayo-chin cried to hell and back , crying and weeping to no end. We dug two graves for the two kittens under the camellia tree later.

We even named them Momo and Nana.

The remaining three finally got through the danger period, and grew up safely.

But Rin discovered a very important reality , nya.

That is ... “Achoo! Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!”

Ever since that snowy night in January, Rin had never stopped sneezing.

I thought it was a symptom before a cold.

But it wasn't like that at all , nya.

Rin went to a nearby doctor to run an allergy test, and the result that came out that time ...

Rin could never forget it , even now.

“No doubt, she's allergic to cats.”

Dun dun DUUUUNN -----!

That day was the first time that Rin experienced what it feels like to “black out”.

Since Kayo-chin's grandma has been keeping java sparrows, they couldn't take in cats in the first place, so we were almost certain that we'd bring them back to raise them in Rin's house — but then this kind of thing happened ... Sigh, what to do?

But as expected ...

"It can't be helped if you're allergic, Rin-chan."

Kayo-chin felt really bad when she said that, and it was only then that Rin finally came to accept this reality.

Because that time , Rin ha d been hanging out with the kittens for a while (every day of winter break of course , and Rin went to Kayo-chin 's place straight after school every day for two weeks straight after the school reopened), causing her eyes to redden and swell, and keep sneezing and having a runny nose as well .

"Yeah, M ommy told me it's about time I give up , too....."

Actually , Rin has been telling M ommy that it wouldn't be a problem, but in the end she had to stop resisting... That day, Kayo-chin said to the very disappointed Rin with a smile:

"Then, let's go look for a new owner for the kitties? If someone nearby is willing to keep them, we can go and visit them again."

She's right— Kayo-chin is so smart!

Rin has only been thinking about what to do in her mind, so she didn't think of this at all ; she couldn't help but hug Kayo-chin happily!

Kitties, Kayo-chin and Rin will take up the responsibilities of a mom and dad , and find a suitable new home for you!

Even if we don't live in the same house, we have to be together forever and ever.

After all , you all are the kittens Rin and Kayo-chin saved o n a snow y night.

Rin will always , always look over you guys— and visit you guys sometimes , nya.

And then, when Rin gr o w s up and can live on her own, Rin will cure her allergy and live with the kitties , nya—!

He h he h he h ♪

In the end, the three kittens that we looked for a new owner for...

Even though we really wanted someone who lived nearby to take them in, the dream didn't come through. In the end, Kayo-chin's relative who lives in the outskirts took them.

I wonder— are they doing well now?

In cat's age, they should now be adult s; could they be moms now?



Today was just like another day.

Wh ile Rin was so focused on chasing down the cat— the sun ha d already set silently.

The surrounding s w ere already dark.

Looking up, you can see that in the still faint , deep blue sky at the beginning of autumn— there was a bright and thin new moon.

Just like a cat's deep and mysterious pupil ...

“Mrow~ Rin hopes one day she can become a cat, nya!”

Rin couldn't help but yell loudly, and then she heard a meow responding to Rin from a distance.

“Ah, it's a kitty, nya!”

Rin declared, and got down on the ground to find cats again ...

The five kittens Rin saved that day taught her about the fragility of small life, and gave Rin a meowing verbal tic.

### Comments ♥ Hanayo

Rin-chan, you can't cure an allergy like you cure a fever... But, Hanayo couldn't bring herself to say it at that time. It's probably because Rin-chan is that kind of energetic person, who doesn't put it on her mind when she sneezes or catches a cold, so she could still keep her optimism even when she heard she has an allergy. If that's the case— let's not pay it any heed!

Hanayo too believes Rin can become her favourite kitty in the future! Even if you can't become a kitty, you can still cure your allergy! Good luck, Rin-chan~♥♥♥

## 07♪ Rin and Ramen

“Speaking of which—why did Rin join μ’s?”

Generous sounds of slurping noodles went into the ears.

It’s all because Maki-chan suddenly asked Rin when she was enjoying her favourite ramen.....

It surprised Rin a lot, so much that she spit out the food in her mouth, the noodles even nearly slipped into her windpipe.

Ugh— cough, cough! Cough cough cough!

I choked. My throat hurt a lot.

“So..... sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you.”

Maki-chan stood up in panic.

“Rin-chan, what’s wrong? Are you okay?”

Kayo-chin, who was shocked as well, reach out to pat Rin gently on the back.

“Cough, cough! So..... sorry, I was surprised— cough, cough.”

Rin, who was still coughing, struggled to reply them; she even teared up a little bit, nya.

On the way home after a μ’s practice.

Rin invited Kayo-chin and Maki-chan to the ramen shop in Akihabara, as a reward for yet another day of practicing hard today, nya!

Rin brought Maki-chan here before at the start of spring. It seemed like it was her first time going into a ramen shop that time, so she looked very

uncomfortable, but she seems to have gotten used to it now— she even counted the price beforehand to buy the meal ticket.

You could really feel the time flying by at times like this, nya~

In front of Rin was a Maki-chan who was completely used to coming to a ramen shop, and something that — because the season quietly came around —made people fall in love with it for its warmth and hotness. That is, Rin's favourite pork bone soy sauce ramen.

Autumn is here, nya.

Rin's favourite ingredient is seaweed sprout♪

Along with soft-boiled egg and corn, it'll be even more *good* !

Rin also doesn't understand why with a ramen this good in front of her, she still choked like this.

And then got surprised again because she doesn't know the reason for this.

Rin is more than a little shocked.

And the reason why Rin become like this is...

“Why did Rin join μ’s?”

They should notice that Rin was this panicked... because of this line, right?

Rin's only weakness.

Which is also Rin's guilty reason for joining the club all this time.

Why did Rin join μ's...



Although it's hard to tell, Rin is actually a pacifist.

Ever since Rin was little, she really liked to play chase, dodgeball and tag.

People around me think that Rin likes to be number one in any competition, but that's not the case at all.

Doesn't matter if it's running, jumping or swimming— Rin got first place just because the result is like that, and it's not because Rin got it because she wanted it.

It's just...

It's just because it's fun, so Rin did these things.

Joyfully running and running— sprinting under the blue sky, emptying your mind, simply moving your body, running and jumping about, giving your everything and leaping forward. It's just because it felt good; that's why Rin did it.

It's kinda similar... to the reason Rin joined μ's to dance, heheh ♪

There was only one time that the Rin who doesn't like to fight for number one...

...cried because she didn't get first place.

Crying and wailing— making a scene.

Feeling so unreconciled, so upset, and not sure what to do.

Rin was also shocked that she would cry over things like that, and was feeling very confused.

Rin still remembers what happened on that day, even now.

That time, my third-year junior high life was nearing its end, and it happened during the autumn track and field day...

Rin and Kayo-chin attended the public school in our area— OJH (Otonokizaka Junior High).

In Otonokizaka, Maki-chan, who was the same age as us, attended another secondary school, so she wasn't in OJH; but Honoka-chan, Kotori-chan and Umi-chan, who are a year older than us, graduated from OJH, and so did Eli-chan.

But when Rin was in third year, everyone had already graduated. Rin and Kayo-chin were already in a "We're graduating soon!" mood since November was so close, so I felt a little uncertain— Rin actually doesn't know how to describe it properly.

I actually started counting down the days left in OJH during the autumn of that year, so I was a little sad.

Rin was in the track and field team in her secondary school days, and because third years like Rin would be leaving the club after the autumn assembly, everyone was in full spirits.

Everyone was so positive—of course, it's because we all wanted to have a good run at the end of our secondary school life, ending it with a bang; plus, everyone knew that we'll need to seriously start preparing for our exams after this assembly, so everyone was even more pumped up...

Rin participated in the short distance 100-meter and 200-meter race, and 400-meter relay race.

And was the last runner in the relay.

Now that I think about it, ever since I got selected to be the fourth and last runner in the relay... Rin had been feeling a little gloomy.

But at that time, Rin thought: how could she be gloomy? Rin not only could participate in an individual event, but also could run freely in the relay race, which is so much fun. For the sake of "following through", Rin is going to give her all~ ♪

Amongst this, probably...

There was probably a factor that was diverting my attention.

Pacifist Rin being selected to be the last runner in the relay.

If it's an individual competition, it doesn't matter if I win or lose!

Rin always thought that: as long as you immerse yourself in sprinting towards the white line at the end of the race track, and so long as you feel good, nothing else matters. But it's not that simple for a relay race, right?

Rin must have known this, more or less...

So that's why she was a little stressed.

But, everyone probably wouldn't think Rin would worry over this.

Everyone must have thought that Rin, who is always meowing and unconcerned, would just go for the finish line without thinking twice. Expecting that Rin would take down the first place, and run back to the team with the finish line, nya.

Ah~ When I think back about it now, there's still a stinging pain in my chest.

Rin thought the same at that time too, that she must take the first place just because she could...



The individual races in the morning had ended, and Rin had taken first place for both the 100-meter and 200-meter short sprint.

That day really was a pleasant sunny day of autumn. During the gathering at the entrance of the sports grounds, all the club members were in a good mood: they were even grateful for the weather today, saying it was as if it was blessing our last competition.

The result, of course, varied from one person to another, and the target ranking everyone had set for themselves also differed. Some people cried because they were surprised by their ranking, while some people were like Rin and simply thought that it was fun to run freely, nya~! In any case, everyone's reaction was different.

But, Rin really thought that this event's atmosphere was on point.

The atmosphere was steady yet nervous, to the point that Rin realized she really likes this kind of atmosphere before the race starts.

Although, there was a thing that was really unexpected...

There was a cheering team cheering for Otonokizaka Junior High's track and field team on that day.

Because it was the last day of the three-day autumn break, apparently some third years who happen to have nothing to do all agreed to come and watch the last track and field competition of their current school life.

Even though this would sound really weird coming from myself, ever since Rin joined this club , the track and field team had scored highly in many competitions across the region and slowly became a really strong club, so the pre-competition rating that year was surprisingly high.

Everyone thought that the track and field team would probably get a good result this year.

On top of that, since most clubs had entered their retiring period, Rin thought it was probably because those third years suddenly didn't have club activities to attend that they were bored to death, so they came to watch the competition with the relaxed air of going to a casual activity & picnic.

“OJH, fight on~!”

“Rin, do your best~!!”

Usually in competitions, the cheering seats are always empty; but today, there were around thirty students, each of them cheering loudly.

They looked really happy.

Although, their enthusiastic cheering actually made Rin uneasy.

That's because I had already emptied my mind when I stood on the starting point, so when hearing “Rin-chan~!” or “Go~!”, Rin couldn't help but to turn around or wave at them.

It wouldn't be as bad if this happened during the matches in the morning earlier.

Even if I got distracted, I could get my focus back as soon as I started running anyway.

Everyone in the cheering seat looked so happy that Rin even felt a little envious.

But when it came to the matches in the afternoon, everything was completely different.

As soon as four members of the relay race got onto the race track...

The atmosphere around seemed to have changed.

After the broadcast sounded, the familiar tension slowly filled up the entire field.

An electric current was sent from the cheering seat too.

Something felt... unusual.

Rin also felt that something was off.

“Do your best~!”, “You can do it~!”, “OJH is the best~!”, and so on— all sorts of cheering sounded from all around.

Rin also understood how much expectations everyone had.

It felt different from the individual matches that Rin participated in earlier in the morning.

And then, something stiff... entered Rin's body along with the cheering sounds.

Was Rin... nervous?

Rin surprised herself for a moment.

Because Rin had never felt like this before.

The sounds of my heart thumping had spread from inside of my body to my ears.

My limbs suddenly felt weak, and all of a sudden the surrounding air also seemed like it had thinned.

Thump, thump.

Heartbeat suddenly increasing.

Thump, thump.

It kept getting wilder.

Right at this moment, Rin heard someone say:

“Look at the cheering seat, amazing—“

Rin lifted her head and looked towards the stand where the cheering seats were at— there was a giant, white piece of horizontal cloth. There were a few huge and black words on it.

“Follow through, OJH: your name will go down in history as the winner!”

It looked like a cheering banner that everyone worked on together.

It was the same for OJH as Otonokizaka High School—there was a rumor flying around of closing down or merging the school.

Ah...

Rin was shocked from the bottom of her heart, and her eyes widened, big and round.

Rin had never experienced this kind of situation in a competition— or should I say, this kind of cheering was also a first.

Ba-dum ba-dum ba-dum ba-dum—

The heartbeat sound that echoed throughout my entire body was steadily accelerating.

I had to win.

Everyone was so looking forward to my performance, so for them— I had to win.

After thinking like this, that certain feeling inside Rin stiffened even more.

Ah..... what should I do?

It felt like something was about to jump right out of my mouth.

With unresponsive legs, Rin dragged her stiff body to the waiting area.

What..... what should I do— Rin feels so weird.

Something doesn't feel right.

As Rin was thinking about that, bang!

A gun shot signaling the start of a match sounded.

The last round started when Rin wasn't paying attention.

This was the last match in Rin's junior high life— a 400-meter relay race.

Rin carried on with her awkward and stiff feelings, and using her powerless and unstable legs— she started to run.

As soon as she got the baton, Rin felt that her limbs were different from usual; they weren't able to move freely.

When Rin got the baton, we were in second place. The distance between us and first place was really close, and normally, I could overtake them easily.

But.

When Rin ran— her body felt so heavy, her breathing felt so rushed.

No matter how hard I ran, I couldn't close the distance at all.

It was the first time Rin felt like this.

It felt like I was running underwater, like in slow motion.

Rin desperately moved her heavy limbs, struggling to run.

The back view of the first-place team's last runner had never felt so far away, and Rin— Rin had never faced this kind of situation before...

By the time Rin snapped back to attention, she realized that let alone getting first place, third place had almost caught up; in the end, we barely scraped by and got second place.

Rin's mind was blank when she reached the finishing line.

Then she knelt on the field... and started crying.

Uwah~ Uwah~ Waaaahhh! Rin looked just like a child getting last place in their first-ever race.

Heh heh heh— now that I think about it, it was so embarrassing!

But I was so upset, so frustrated at that time.

I felt so sorry to everyone, and I had no idea what I should do.

Everyone was shocked, standing still where they were.

Because Rin normally wouldn't make a scene like this.

No, that's because Rin had never lost on the field...

Actually, Rin realized something when she was wailing.

Maybe Rin was never a pacifist.

All this time, Rin always thought that her joining sports competitions was just because she really likes running, and the result didn't matter. It didn't matter if she won or lost, it didn't matter if it was first or second place—Rin wouldn't pay it any mind.

In fact, Rin really didn't mind if she lost to someone else, as she had placed second a few times before.

But Rin didn't mind if she got this kind of result. The teacher and the club president even told Rin that she should be more motivated, and shoot for first

place. However, Rin still thought she should remain the same.

After all, Rin didn't join competitions to get first place.

It's only because it felt good to run.

Victory or defeat, and ranking— Rin had always thought she would never care about these kinds of things.

If there's a winner, someone has to lose.

If there's a first place, someone has to be placed behind them.

Rin doesn't really like this feeling.

Rin hates to rank people.

It's fine as long as everyone has fun.

But then...

The first time Rin lost a competition that she really wanted to win.

Rin realized.

Rin felt like she didn't mind the result because she had only ever participated in individual competitions that only affected herself, the easy ones where she didn't need to care about other people.

If winning or losing only affected myself, it really wouldn't matter.

But the Rin today, really wanted... to win.

Really didn't want to lose to other people.

Thought that she must, must win.

For the people who cheered for us so loudly.

For the club mates participating in sports competition for the last time.

For the glory of OJH that might disappear at any moment.

Everyone had such high expectation of us, so Rin had to do her very best to emerge victorious— that's what Rin thought.

In the end, when Rin thought about it.

Her heart started to jump fiercely, she got nervous all of a sudden, and lost all the strength in her body.

It was the first time ever for Rin.

The first time ever I thought about wanting to win, and the nervousness inside skyrocketed to its peak...

Maybe it's only when people want to win for the sake of others... that they really want to win.

This is why Rin joined μ's.

...but, I think no one understands what am I talking about. Tee-hee ♪

Actually, after that sports competition, Kayo-chin—who came to watch the competition—was comforting Rin, and said:

“Rin-chan, it's the first time I saw a Rin-chan so nervous, with so much desire to win. Rin-chan did really well today ♥”

Kayo-chin ...

Rin's eyes immediately welled up with tears, and then Rin just hugged Kayo-chin, and — “Waaaaaaahhh!” — started crying.

I was really frustrated , really upset.

Rin really wanted to win at that time.

Really d id n't want to lose.

Really wanted to be cool in front of everyone.

Saying that she didn't care about winning or losing, it was all a lie.

She must have been using it as an excuse, to avoid certain things.

Avoid the real result.

Avoid the thirst for winning from the bottom of her heart ...

There were so many thoughts that ran through her mind.

Rin was full of herself, just because she happened to be born with a pair of legs that were good at running.

Rin really wanted to win for the first time ever, but couldn't even muster any strength due to nervousness ...

Rin felt so shameful, so frustrated, so upset. She really wanted to pour her heart out to Kayo-chin, but she couldn't even say anything—she could only cry in a complete mess.

Seeing Rin like this, Kayo-chin said:

"It's no problem, Rin-chan is already super fast, so if you just practice a little more, then surely ... Oh yeah! I'll run with Rin-chan starting tomorrow! I'll keep you company during your morning exercise!"

Kayo-chin smiled gently.

She thought Rin had only cried because she didn't get first place.

Looking at Kayo-chin's expression, Rin, who was just crying earlier, couldn't help but smile.

"Okay, but after this competition, Rin is going to retire."

When Rin said that, Kayo-chin's expression looked like she said something wrong.

So Rin smiled even brighter. And then, Rin continued:

“So, to not let down Kayo-chin’s wishes, Rin will keep running after tomorrow! Even though I lost today, Rin wants to keep running and running and running— for everyone, for Kayo-chin, Rin will keep doing her best.”

Other than that, Rin didn’t know what else to say.

Because Rin feels that... she can only rely on running to solve all her problems.

Rin also doesn’t quite understand what logic is this, and at the same time clenched her fists after saying that.

So, Rin is currently running for Kayo-chin.

For the Kayo-chin at that time , who wasn’t good at running but still suggested that we run together ...

Kayo-chin really wanted to be an idol, but she keeps hesitating, so Rin thought she should push her from behind , and run with her.

Shouting “woohoo” while running.

It doesn’t matter how heavy Kayo-chin’s steps are, as Rin will do her best and keep pushing her ♪

Because from the day that Kayo-chin said she wanted to run with Rin, Rin has been wanting the strength to keep doing her best for the person she cares about.

Also, because Kayo-chin brought Rin into μ’s with her...

Rin found many of the things that the Rin from that day was missing.

The strength to give your all for other people.

The feeling of doing your best for yourself.

The strength to throw out everything and soar, for the place you care about...

Going all out seriously, fighting until the very end— the people who fought with their everything for each of their own goals, they are all here.

They are Rin's most important companions, which is also everyone in μ's.

To be honest, Rin wasn't very interested in idols.

But looking at Kayo-chin, Honoka-chan, Maki-chan and everyone— Rin had only truly felt, what she was missing the whole time.

Because everyone was so amazing.

The unshakable and strong will that everyone had, it was really amazing.

Like wanting to be an idol, and saving the school as an idol— that kind of straightforward will.

And they will face victory and defeat seriously.

The Rin who likes to play racing and tag always looked like she really cared about winning or losing in other people's eyes— but Rin had always thought that she doesn't care about it, just to avoid the real outcome. Everyone's strong will and attitude was the thing that the past Rin lacked.

So that's why Rin is now running with everyone, and fighting for victory with everyone.

That time— which was also the day of the relay race. In the past, Rin had always been running by herself, so she thought winning or losing wasn't important. But that time, for the sake of everyone in OJH, she had a desire to win for the very first time.

Rin wants to change herself, the me who couldn't unleash her true strength at an important time, with everyone in μ's.

Because, when you really want to win...

But you don't have the power to fight for yourself and for the things that you care about, isn't that the same as being powerless?

On top of that, it was the first time Rin found out that...

Rin actually gets stage fright easily.

If I keep standing on stage as an idol, maybe I can overcome this weakness...



“Rin-chan, are you really okay?”

When Rin returned to the present, she noticed Kayo-chin was looking at Rin, who was halfway eating her ramen, worriedly. Maki-chan also awkwardly passed a handkerchief over.

“I’m really sorry. I shouldn’t have said something weird when you’re eating ramen.”

Maki-chan even mumbled while saying— jeez, I can’t believe myself, even though I knew asking this kind of question to Rin when she’s eating ramen would be useless..... I really am an idiot— anyway, it was these kinds of words.

Rin, who had just woken up from her short-lived thoughts, looked at the two of them dumbfoundedly.

And then, inside Rin’s heart... a stroke of happiness emerged instantly.

They were so worried about Rin, and understood what she was thinking, too.

Rin is really glad to have joined μ’s.

“Rin really, really, really~ love Maki-chan and Kayo-chin the most ♡♡♡”

Rin automatically stood up quickly, and ran over to hug Kayo-chin and Maki-chan who were sitting on the other side of the table.

“I want to share half of my seaweed sprout with you two!”

Rin finished and was getting ready to send out her seaweed sprout—

“The Rin-chan who loves seaweed sprout the most, is giving away her seaweed sprout to other people— Rin-chan, are you okay? Are you sick anywhere?”

“I don’t really like seaweed sprout with my ramen, so there’s no need to give it to me. I thought you really liked seaweed sprouts? Just eat it yourself.”

Kayo-chin with a face of worry, and Maki-chan who is acting snobbish.

Their concern made Rin so happy. Rin lightly bounc ed i n her chair at the ramen shop again.

“About that, Rin ate too quickly just now— can I go add on more noodles?”

After Rin said that while smiling...

Maki-chan said, “Adding on again~?”, while looking for 100-yen coins for Rin’s add-on, as Rin was still eating ramen.

Meanwhile Kayo-chin looked envious, as if she was saying, “No matter how much Rin-chan eats she won’t get fat; that’s so nice~”

Actually, Rin still doesn’t really like competing, even now.

Rin just likes to be with everyone...

Likes to sing and dance with everyone in μ’s.

But, if Rin, for her beloved members of μ’s...

...could become number one in everyone’s heart , and let even more people like μ’s, that would be great.

### Comments ♥ Maki

Actually, I never understood why Rin joined μ’s. Was it for her childhood friend Kayo-chan ? Or was it because Honoka was troubled? I thought these two weren’t the real reason. She always practiced harder than everyone else , making herself super hungry ... Watching this kind of Rin eating her favourite pork bone soy sauce ramen, I couldn’t help it and asked. I didn’t th ink she

would be so surprised to the point of choking like that, so I feel pretty bad. But there's one thing I really want to tell Rin. Actually... compared to pork bone ramen, I prefer miso ramen more!